

Message Text

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VIENNA FOR USDEL MBFR

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1. WE HAVE CAREFULLY REVIEWED UK SUGGESTION THAT USE OF

SELECTED DATA ON INCREASES IN SOVIET FORCES IN NGA WOULD BE EFFECTIVE REBUTTAL TO SOVIET ARGUMENT THAT HISTORICALLY ACHIEVED CORRELATION OF FORCE SHOULD BE MAINTAINED IN MBFR. OUR REVIEW INCLUDED EXAMINATION OF THE DATA REQUESTED REFTEL AS WELL AS CONSIDERATION OF THE VALUE OF SUCH AN APPROACH.

2. IN SUM, WE SEE MORE DANGERS THAN BENEFITS IN FOLLOWING UK SUGGESTED TACTIC. THE DANGERS RELATE PRIMARILY TO EXPOSING ALLIED SIDE TO EASILY DOCUMENTED RECIPROCAL ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF THE SOVIET POSITION, I.E. EXPOSE THE ALLIED SIDE TO SOVIET COUNTER-ARGUMENTS RELATING TO US AND ALLIED FORCE IMPROVEMENTS, AND TO THE SENSITIVITY OF THE INFORMATION WE COULD PUT FORWARD.

TO ILLUSTRATE:

A. THE LOW US PERSONNEL STRENGTHS STEMMING FROM THE VIETNAM BUILD UP HAVE BEEN CORRECTED RESULTING IN A

CONSIDERABLE INCREASE IN US MANPOWER BETWEEN 1968 AND THE PRESENT. THE SOVIET COULD PRESUMABLY DOCUMENT THIS DRAWING ON PUBLICLY AVAILABLE FIGURES.

B. DEPLOYMENT OF THE LANCE SURFACE-TO-SURFACE MISSILE SYSTEM TO REPLACE HONEST JOHN AND SERGEANT GIVES US FORCES INCREASED FIRE POWER WITH FEWER PERSONNEL, A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN CAPABILITY.

C. IN THE PERIOD 1970-73, NATO ALLIES' DEFENSE EXPENDITURES INCREASED BY OVER 30 PERCENT IN TERMS OF CURRENT PRICES.

D. IN THE ANTI-ARMOR AREA, SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE AND ARE STILL PROJECTED AS ATTESTED BY THE EURO GROUP COMMUNIQUE OF DECEMBER 1971. THE COMMUNIQUE NOTED MORE THAN 1,100 MAIN BATTLE TANKS AND 700 ANTI-TANK WEAPONS ENTERING THEIR FORCES IN 1971 AND 1972, AND 600 TANKS AND 8,500 ANTI-TANK WEAPONS MORE TO ENTER THE FORCES IN THE PERIOD 1973-1976. IN ADDITION, US FORCES HAVE THEMSELVES SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED THEIR

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ANTI-ARMOR CAPABILITY.

3. IN OTHER WORDS, RATHER THAN CONVINCE THE SOVIETS, THE BRITISH APPROACH COULD INVITE SOVIET ATTENTION TO PAST AND ON-GOING PROGRESS IN ALLIED FORCES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS AND TO THE SIGNIFICANT MEASURES THE ALLIES THEMSELVES HAVE TAKEN SINCE 1968, AND ARE STILL UNDERTAKING. SUCH DISCUSSIONS RISK GIVING SOVIETS OPPORTUNITY

TO PRESSURE ALLIES ON FORCE IMPROVEMENTS STEPS AND COULD STIMULATE SOVIET INTEREST IN QUALITATIVE LIMITATIONS.

4. FINALLY, THERE ARE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE SECURITY OF INFORMATION WHICH MILITATES AGAINST DEVELOPING AND PUTTING FORWARD THE INFORMATION REQUESTED.

5. THE SOVIETS ARE NOT BELIEVED TO KNOW CURRENT SYSTEM CAPABILITIES OR OUR CAPACITY TO ANALYZE THE INFORMATION GATHERED. EXPOSURE OF DETAILS WOULD GIVE THE SOVIETS A GOOD IDEA OF WHAT WE CAN DO NOW AND HOW WE DO IT, AND PROBABLY WOULD RESULT IN HARMFUL COUNTERMEASURES. ALTHOUGH WE COULD ASSEMBLE THE DETAILED DATA AT THE LEVEL DESIRED, THE POTENTIAL HARM TO OUR CAPABILITY FOR CURRENT ASSESSMENT OF WARSAW PACT FORCES AND ULTIMATELY IN OUR ABILITY TO MONITOR A REDUCTION AGREEMENT OUTWEIGHS, IN OUR JUDGMENT, THE VALUE OF THE UK SUGGESTION TO DEMONSTRATE IN DETAIL THE LEVEL AND NATURE OF WARSAW PACT IMPROVEMENTS.

6. FYI. THE DELEGATION SHOULD BE AWARE ALSO THAT TO PROVIDE THE DATA REQUESTED WOULD REQUIRE MOST OF OUR ANALYTICAL ASSETS, INCLUDING PHOTOINTERPRETERS, AS 1968 DATA MUST BE COMPLETELY REVIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF INFORMATION HOLDINGS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE. PRODUCTION OF THE REQUESTED DATA, PARTICULARLY THAT FOR THE 1968 BASE LINE, WOULD REQUIRE AN EXTENDED PERIOD, AND WOULD NEVER BE COMPARABLE IN CONFIDENCE LEVELS TO THAT FOR 1973. END FYI. KISSINGER

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